United Nations A/C.2/53/L.8

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
16 October 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Second Committee
Agenda item 95
Operational activities for development

Republic of Indonesia:* draft resolution

Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/211 of 22 December 1989, 47/199 of 22 December 1992, 50/120 of 20 December 1995 and 52/203 of 18 December 1997, as well as other relevant resolutions,

Reaffirming that operational activities for development within the United Nations system have a critical and unique role to play in enabling developing countries to continue to take a leading role in the management of their own development process,

Stressing that national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for the national programming of operational activities for development within the United Nations system and that programmes should be based on such development plans and priorities and should therefore be country-driven,

Bearing in mind that the effectiveness of operational activities should be measured by their impact on the sustained economic growth and sustainable development of developing countries,

Stressing, in that context, the need to take into account the outcomes and commitments of relevant United Nations conferences, as well as the individual mandates and complementarities of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations development system, bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication,

Stressing also that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations system should be, *inter alia*, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the needs of developing countries in a flexible manner, and that the operational activities of the United

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77, and China.

98-30861 (E) 191098

Nations system are carried out for the benefit of the developing countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development,

Recognizing the urgent and specific needs of the low-income countries, in particular the least developed countries,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

2. *Reaffirms* its resolutions 47/199 and 50/120, and stresses the need to implement fully all the elements of those resolutions in a coherent manner, keeping in mind their interlinkages;

3. *Endorses* Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/42 of 31 July 1998 on overall guidance on operational activities for development to the United Nations funds and programmes;

4. *Stresses* that the needs and priorities of recipient countries require increasing the flexibility and decentralization of operational activities to the country level;

5. *Notes with regret* that, although significant progress has already been made on the restructuring and rationalization of the governance and functioning of the United Nations development funds and programmes, there has not been, as part of the overall reform process, any increase in resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis;

6. *Strongly reaffirms* that the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the operational activities of the United Nations system must be enhanced by, *inter alia*, a substantial increase in their funding on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries, as well as through the full implementation of resolutions 47/199, 48/162 of 20 December 1993 and 50/120;

7. *Notes* the urgency of a productive outcome of the continuing discussions in the context of the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes to reverse the declining trend in core resources and to put the funding on a predictable, continuous and assured basis commensurate with the needs of the developing countries, and, in this context, invites the Economic and Social Council to review the overall financial picture of the funds and programmes annually, in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996;

8. *Urges* developed countries, in particular those countries whose overall performance is not commensurate with their capacity, taking into account established official development assistance targets, including targets established at the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries and their current levels of contribution, to increase substantially their official development assistance, including contributions to the operational activities of the United Nations system;

9. *Notes with appreciation* the sustained contributions of many donors and recipient countries to the operational activities for development in a spirit of partnership;

10. *Expresses serious concern* at the persistent insufficiency of resources for the operational development activities of the United Nations, in particular the decline in contributions to core resources, and the need to urgently reverse this trend;

11. *Reaffirms* the need for priority allocation of scarce grant resources to programmes and projects in low-income countries, particularly the least developed countries;

12. *Emphasizes* that recipient Governments have the primary responsibility for coordinating, on the basis of national strategies and priorities, all types of external

assistance, including that provided by multilateral organizations, in order to integrate effectively such assistance into their development process;

13. *Stresses* that the reform of the United Nations should respect the distinct mandates of the separate sectoral and specialized entities, funds, programmes and specialized agencies, taking into account their complementarities;

14. *Emphasizes* that the pilot phase of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework should promote a country-driven, coherent response by the United Nations system to achieve greater impact at the country level, in conformity with and in support of national priorities as expressed in the country strategy notes or relevant national development plans, as appropriate;

15. *Stresses* the importance of ensuring full Government participation in and full ownership of the formulation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and its approval by the recipient Government concerned, bearing in mind that the responsibility for coordination of all assistance and developmental activities rest with the national government;

16. *Notes* that the country strategy note remains a voluntary initiative and that where it does not exist, other similar frameworks reflecting national priorities should be used as the basis for the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, to ensure that Framework fully responds to the priorities and needs of the Government;

17. *Stresses* the growing need for incorporating the regional and subregional dimension, as appropriate, in the United Nations operational activities for development, and encourages the resident coordinators, in close consultation with Governments, to secure greater involvement of the regional commissions in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as appropriate;

18. *Urges* the United Nations Development Group to work in a fully transparent and accountable manner towards a more coherent United Nations performance in the development field, while respecting the specific mandates and identities of its members under the coordination of government;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make the resident coordinator system more participatory in its functioning at the field level by, *inter alia*, making greater use of thematic groups and adopting a more consultative approach within the United Nations system;

20. *Notes* the improvements in the functioning of the resident coordinator system, and encourages further progress, in close consultation with national Governments, by continuing to broaden the base of recruitment of resident coordinators and improving selection criteria and procedures, including through the use of competency assessment and training and by ensuring that the resident coordinators take fully into account the mandates of all organizations of the United Nations development system;

21. *Invites* the United Nations system, including the funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and the Secretariat, to provide, as appropriate, support to the resident coordinator system;

22. *Reaffirms* that resident coordinators, in full consultation with national Governments, should facilitate a coherent and coordinated United Nations follow-up to major international conferences at the field level;

23. *Stresses* that the resident coordinator system, where requested by host Governments, use the field level committee and thematic working groups to promote better integration of the United Nations operational activities in national development efforts;

24. *Notes* the current initiatives in pursuing common premises, including by taking cost-benefit studies as called for by relevant resolutions, and encourages further implementation of such initiatives, where appropriate, while ensuring that there will be no additional burden on host countries;

25. *Calls for* further simplification and harmonization of the rules of procedure used by the United Nations development system in its operational activities, in particular by the promotion of greater consistency in the presentation of budgets at the headquarters level, as well as in the sharing of administrative systems and services, the rationalization of existing procedures in the field, where possible, and in the development of common databases, in consultation with national Governments;

26. *Decides* that the objective of capacity-building and its sustainability should continue to be an essential part of the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level, with the aim of integrating activities and providing support to efforts to strengthen national capacities in the fields of, *inter alia*, policy and programme formulation, development management, planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and review;

27. *Also decides* that, where Governments so desire, the United Nations system should be ready to engage in providing an enabling environment to strengthen the capacity of civil societies and national non-governmental organizations involved in development activities, in accordance with national policies and priorities;

28. *Further decides* that the United Nations system should use, to the fullest extent possible, available national expertise and endogenous technologies in the implementation of operational activities;

29. *Calls for* further work on the development of common guidelines at the field level for the recruitment, training and remuneration of national project personnel, including national consultants, in the formulation and implementation of development projects and programmes supported by the United Nations development system to enhance the coherence of the system;

30. *Notes* the report on pilot evaluation conducted on the impact of operational activities and the need for full and effective involvement of the recipient Governments concerned in the process of such evaluation, and decides that the United Nations development system should continue to work on promoting the operationalization of capacity-building concepts, as well as on ways of enhancing the sustainability of capacity-building, including through country programming frameworks;

31. *Also notes* that capacity-building should be explicitly articulated as a goal of all technical assistance provided by the United Nations system and should be conceived of not only as human resources training, but also to include the development of individual organizations and the improvement of the environment in which they operate;

32. *Decides* that the members of the United Nations Development Group should continue to work on promoting and expanding national execution, including through the simplification of relevant procedures so as to contribute to the advancement of national ownership;

33. *Requests* the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to undertake efforts in the context of national execution and capacity-building to enhance the absorptive capacity in developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries and Africa, and to assist similar efforts undertaken by those countries;

34. *Stresses* that South-South cooperation (economic cooperation among developing countries/technical cooperation among developing countries) offers viable opportunities for the development of developing countries, and invites all United Nations entities to mainstream economic and technical cooperation among developing countries in their development activities, *inter alia*, through increased allocation of resources from their regular budgets and through incorporating economic and technical cooperation among developing countries modalities into United Nations development projects whenever possible;

35. *Notes* with satisfaction the broad-based support for technical cooperation among developing countries expressed by member States at the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action;

36. *Welcomes* the proposal on a United Nations day for South-South cooperation, as well as the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the integration of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries in the operational activities of the United Nations (A/53/226/Add.4) and his report on the revised guidelines on technical cooperation among developing countries (E/1997/110);

37. *Requests* the United Nations Development Programme, in this context, to substantially increase the allocation of core resources to enable the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries to carry out the General Assembly mandates in promoting technical cooperation among developing countries without affecting the allocation of resources for national programmes;

38. *Urges* all funds and programmes to increase the procurement of goods and services from developing countries, both as a mechanism for promoting South-South cooperation and enhancing national execution;

39. *Emphasizes* the importance of disseminating the experience of effective and efficient cooperation within the United Nations development system, and urges the United Nations system to give support to such activities, *inter alia*, through interregional projects for technical cooperation;

40. *Recognizes* that the monitoring and evaluation process of operational activities, including joint evaluations, should continue to be nationally led, and that the United Nations system should therefore support, where requested by Governments, the strengthening of national evaluation capacities;

41. *Emphasizes* that further steps need to be taken to evaluate the results and impact of the operational activities for development, in consultation with Governments, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of operational activities;

42. *Recognizes*, in that context, the need to strengthen capacities of the recipient countries to perform both effective programme, project and financial monitoring and impact evaluations of operational activities funded by the United Nations;

43. *Underlines* the importance of promoting, under the leadership of Governments, greater collaboration on issues relating to evaluation among recipient Governments, the United Nations Development Group and relevant development partners at the country level;

44. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the United Nations development system to ensure gender balance when making appointments, including at the senior level and in the field, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions;

45. *Stresses* the need for gender mainstreaming in operational activities of the United Nations system, in particular in support of poverty eradication and in ensuring availability of funding sources for such programmes;

46. *Also stresses* the important role of the Economic and Social Council in ensuring coordination of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, including through overall guidance for that purpose to all funds and programmes;

47. *Notes* that the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes should ensure that the heads of these funds and programmes include in their annual reports to the Economic and Social Council, prepared in accordance with Council resolution 1994/33, a thorough analysis of problems encountered and lessons learned, with emphasis on issues arising from the implementation of the Secretary-General's reform programme, the triennial policy review and the follow-up to the conferences, so as to allow the Council to fulfil its coordinating role;

48. *Requests* the Secretary-General to pursue his initiative to strengthen the coordination arrangements at the regional level in pursuance of the measures outlined in annex III, part B of Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, and, in that context, encourages the regional commissions to exercise a team leadership role, in particular by promoting inter-agency cooperative relationships at the regional level;

49. *Encourages* greater cooperation between World Bank and all funds and programmes, with a view to increased complementarity and better cooperation in their activities, building on the existing arrangements and fully in accordance with the priorities of the recipient Government;

50. *Calls upon* the United Nations system, in implementing the present resolution, to bear in mind the specific requirements of the continuum from humanitarian assistance through rehabilitation to development, while ensuring that scarce resources for development are not diverted to humanitarian assistance and that sufficient additional resources for humanitarian assistance are made available by the international community;

51. *Requests* the Secretary-General, after consultations with the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, to present a report to the General Assembly for its consideration at its fifty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999, on an appropriate management process, containing clear guidelines, targets, benchmarks and time-frames for the full implementation of the present resolution;

52. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council, during the operational activities segment of its substantive sessions of 1999 and 2000, to examine the operational activities of the United Nations system with a view to ensuring the full implementation of the present resolution;

53. *Reaffirms* that the governing bodies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system should take appropriate action for the full implementation of the present resolution, and requests the executive heads of those funds, programmes and specialized agencies, bearing in mind paragraph 41 above, to submit a yearly progress report to their governing bodies on measures taken and envisaged for the implementation of the present resolution, as well as appropriate recommendations;

54. *Decides*, as an integral part of the next comprehensive triennial policy review, in consultation with Member States, to conduct an evaluation of the impact of the pilot phase of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in the field of operational activities, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report containing information on

progress in that regard to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly for its consideration through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999;

55. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of the present resolution in the context of the triennial policy review, and to make appropriate recommendations.